

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY LAUDS CONTINUED FUNDING FOR PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that \$25 million to help local communities prepare for future natural and man-made disasters was included in an appropriations bill that passed the House of Representatives last week. Hinchey worked to provide this funding for the pre-disaster mitigation program that has benefited the Town of Dryden and Village of Waverly. The program, which is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), was previously known as Project Impact.

"The plan the Town of Dryden developed with this program's assistance was instrumental in obtaining funding from FEMA earlier this year," said Hinchey. "We've overcome numerous obstacles on the way to ensuring that FEMA is able to continue to help local communities with this important work."

Project Impact was created by the Clinton Administration to shift the way communities think about disasters from a reactive to a proactive approach. It is a public-private partnership that funds emergency management preparation activities and has been a relatively low-cost way to save lives and prevent damage in cases of natural disasters and other emergencies.

Both Dryden and Waverly have used their designations under this program to develop hazard mitigation plans. Earlier this year, Dryden was awarded \$307,800 to stabilize a 400-foot section of Virgil Creek's stream bank where erosion threatens several residences and County Highway 157. The town's grant application was largely based on its hazard mitigation plan.

President Bush eliminated funding for these pre-disaster mitigation activities in his budget request for fiscal year 2002. Hinchey supported an amendment offered by U.S. Representative Lois Capps (D-CA) that would have earmarked \$25 million for the program. The amendment was defeated but the Senate version of the bill included the funding. Hinchey then joined Capps and 52 of their colleagues in writing to the conference committee empanelled to resolve the differences between the two versions of the bill. The letter urged the conferees to consider the success of the program and provide the \$25 million appropriation. The conferees agreed and both the House and the Senate passed the bill last week. It is expected to be signed into law shortly.